

The CASTLE OF LIES

BY ARTHUR HENRY VESEY
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CHAPTER XXIX.

I Open the Safe.

"It is true," she murmured. It is true, and too horrible."

"Do not believe it," I said obstinately. "It is impossible."

"Can one deny a fact? Am I a child to be soothed with smooth words? I have seen; I must believe, though God knows the truth makes me wish a hundred times that I lay beside my poor disgraced brother."

It is always painful to see one whom we respect the prey of an emotion uncontrolled. It was doubly painful for me to see this strong woman, whose dominant quality was courage and calm, writhe under the blow that deprived her for the moment of all power to think coherently. I dared not tell her my belief that I held the combination of the safe, and that before many minutes were passed I might have the papers in my possession.

The woman who tortured us both stood at the threshold of the little room Helena had just left, a malevolent glare in her hour of triumph. As I looked toward her, tempted to expect her brutality from that room, and if my surmise was false, to force from her, even by violence, if necessary, the combination of the safe, she withdrew hastily, leaving Helena and myself alone. It was then that I feared the worst. She had appeared to Helena. She was confident of her success.

Still I held Helena's hands tightly in mine. I wished to give back to her her peace, her calm courage.

"Mr. Haddon," she whispered presently, "do you think—is it possible—to do this thing?"

"It is possible; but it would be the act of a madman and a liar," I said gently.

"You say it is possible." She withdrew her hands almost roughly. Her voice was monotonous and harsh.

"Then you will save us, mother and myself, from this deep disgrace."

"There is no service that I would not do for you, Miss Brett, that would bring you peace and happiness."

"Peace! Happiness!" she interrupted with fierce remonstrance. "I do not look for peace or happiness. Honor itself—and the motto of the Bretts is Honor, My Sword—can no longer be our proud boast. But if silence can be purchased it must be. I dare not let my brother's name be held in reproach. I dare not, I cannot, for his mother's sake, let it be known that he has been false to England."

"We may save him if—"

"Yes," she broke in with a strange exultation that was even more dreadful to me than her despair, "and it is you whom I have despised that is to save us. A life for a life—those were the words I said to you at Lucerne. Now it is to be dishonor for dishonor. I am asking you a terrible sacrifice. I am dragging you with me to the depths. But there is no other to help us. Say that you will."

"Your grief robs you of your reason," I said gently. "Escape is not to be found in that way. It is the last hope of a desperate and unscrupulous adventurer, who has herself little hope of success. It is her last card, and she will lose nothing by playing it. But we, you and I, we risk everything."

"Ah, you refuse! You are afraid of the risks. I might have known you would be afraid. That woman said that it was hopeless to ask a service so heroic from one who was a proven—Oh, forgive me, I did not mean to say that."

"Miss Brett, I think there is no disgrace I would not gladly endure to help you. I swore to rescue your brother's honor if it were possible. If I could do so now, though I sacrificed myself, I tell you I would. More than that, though every instinct tells me that I should fail, I will do what you ask even now—"

"Heaven bless you!" She cried brokenly.

But first of all I want you to realize clearly just what you are asking. I want you to be quite sure that you are not adding dishonor to dishonor in asking me to do this thing. No; it is not that I am afraid. I have not that kind of fear. But I think that neither of us should be so cowardly as to yield to this woman's demands. In the ordinary world lies your brother. Ask yourself, when you see him, if it is merely the merciful hand of death that has smoothed his forehead, or whether the calm and serenity is that of a man who held the motto of his house, "Honor, My Sword."

This appeal was perhaps not wholly sincere. One cannot deny facts because one wishes to. It still seemed to me that it must be true that Sir Mortimer was proven guilty of taking bribes.

Nor did I dare tell Helena now of my wild conjecture. I dared not raise her hopes at the risk of a speedy disillusionment. Once the papers were in my possession, together we could defy Madame de Varnier. And if this appointment was to be mine I hoped that by the tier of her brother Helena

would recover her courage and clear vision.

Again I was alone. But Madame de Varnier who had awaited the result of Helena's intercession, now came toward me. I saw with a thrill of thankfulness that the door of the room of the safe was not closed.

"You told me that it would be for her to decide," she said confidently. "I know that she has decided. And your own decision? Does your resolution falter?"

"You are mistaken," I began to pace the floor with rapid steps, advancing nearer and nearer to the room of the safe. "She has not yet decided. I believe with all my heart that she will refuse. She is in my oratory there. She will gain strength from the presence of the dead to defy you."

"Perhaps," sneered the woman. "She seated herself near the table slightly turned from the room she had left."

An instant and I had gained it, and drawn the bolt. Another and I was on my knees, my fingers tremblingly whirling about the shining surface of the little knob that controlled the combination.

"C-O-W-A-R-D."

I whirled in this way and that, then pulled at the handle.

It resisted my efforts. A cold perspiration broke out on my forehead. I had been a victim of my own madness.

But again I moved the knob; this time slowly, with infinite care, with the calmness that comes with despair.

"C-O-W-A-R-D."

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"C-O-W-A-R-D."

"C-O-W-A-R-D."

"C-O-W-A-R-D."

"Ah, that's better," he sighed. "Now I am among friends." His sardonic smile took in Madame de Varnier and myself, who had not yet recovered from our astonishment.

Indeed, it was rather embarrassing that held me speechless. Presently he would know that it was not Sir Mortimer whom he had surprised at the safe. And knowing that, it was inevitable that he mistake me for one of the conspirators. First of all at Vitznau—I had taken dispatches from his hand. Had I indeed been really under the influence of an opiate I might have urged that as the reason. I could have said that I was not conscious of any deception; I was simply a victim of Dr. Starva and Madame de Varnier, and not responsible for my acts.

But not only had I not taken the opiate, but Madame de Varnier knew that I had not, and even had I wished to tell the lie she would have contradicted me.

And now he had caught me red-handed at the safe. He would draw his conclusions swiftly. It would be absurd to suppose that I should know the combination of the safe, merely as Madame de Varnier's guest. A hostess does not vouchsafe to her guest the key of her strong box. If I were not Sir Mortimer, I must be in league with Madame de Varnier and Dr. Starva.

That was the conclusion he must arrive at. To tell him the absolute truth—that by one chance out of ten thousand I had stumbled on the combination—would only deepen his conviction as to my guilt.

And Helena? What would she think? Would her faith in me be so strong that she would believe me? Had Captain Forbes not surprised me at this moment my guessing of the riddle of the safe would have seemed miraculous indeed, but the fact that I had the papers, and could place them in her hands to be destroyed, would support my story readily enough.

But I dare not give her these papers before Captain Forbes and Madame de Varnier? It seemed to me that the king's messenger of all per-

sonalities had received it?"

"No," I said calmly. "It was time to put an end to this game of cross-purposes."

"Then possibly madam can enlighten you as to its whereabouts."

"I, your Excellency? Oh, no!" She swept me a mocking courtesy. "I am not so deeply in your Excellency's counsel."

"My patience, Sir Mortimer," cried Forbes, breaking into direct speech. "has its limits. I see you at Lucerne only with the greatest difficulty. I warn you of the grave purport of a dispatch which I am unable to deliver to you because of your condition. The next morning, when I would see you, you have disappeared again. I trace you here with difficulty. When for the third time I attempt to deliver this dispatch, I am held captive; the dispatch is forcibly taken from me. When I ask you if you have received it, you give me an indifferent answer. I dare not believe that you are so far lost to your sense of duty that you countenance these violent acts of a bandit. But I must insist—"

He paused abruptly. I thought it because he realized that his anger had carried him too far. But when I looked where he looked, I saw Helena Brett.

"Miss Brett!" he exclaimed in pained surprise, "I am sorry to see you here."

"And I am infinitely relieved, though bewildered, to find you, Captain Forbes." She extended him her hand, smiling wanly.

"But you will help me to make your brother realize the danger of further misunderstanding," he said gently, his anger at my indifference vanishing at sight of her pale and haggard countenance.

"My brother, Captain Forbes, is dead. He lies in that room," she answered firmly, though her lips trembled.

She had made her decision. She, too, was determined at all hazards not to act a lie.

As for Captain Forbes, he was dumb with astonishment. His eyes widened with dismay and concern. But though he did not speak his startled glance dwelt on me.

"Mr. Haddon is my loyal friend," said Helena, interpreting his look. At the same time she reassured me with a quiet smile that more than her words expressed her trust.

A slow flush of anger mounted to the temples of the king's messenger. He towered over me menacingly.

"You have dared tamper with his Majesty's business; you have tricked one of his servants. By Heaven, you will rue it dearly!"

"Captain Forbes!" Helena laid her hand on his sleeve in her distress.

"Madam!" He turned on her indignantly. "This man has deliberately passed himself off as your brother. He tricked me into giving him important papers of state. You know that, and you defend him? You dare call him friend?"

"I did not know that," she replied firmly. "But I dare call him friend, Captain Forbes. You do not understand—"

"Understand!" he stormed, before I could make any reply myself. "I understand this only too well: he is in league with a notorious woman, and the still more infamous Dr. Starva, two Bulgarian adventurers of the most dangerous type. I think that is enough. That he has obtained under false pretenses my dispatches convicts him of high treason. He will not leave my sight until he is placed under arrest."

"I am an American," I said quietly. "You may find it more difficult to do that than you imagine."

My mild expostulation maddened him only the more.

"An American?" He advanced to me as if to lay hands on me. "Do you flatter yourself that your nationality leaves you free to play the spy and traitor with impunity? Give me those papers."

He came a step nearer. Instinctively I placed my hands at my breast pocket as if to protect the precious papers. But again Helena, distressed at his violence, restrained him.

"Captain Forbes," she pleaded, "pray restrain your anger. It is natural that you should feel the deepest suspicion against Mr. Haddon. But if you will be patient, I am sure he will make all clear to you."

"Miss Brett," he said sternly, "this is a man's work. It is hardly becoming in you to defend one who has traduced your brother's honor. How dare you claim an impostor like this as friend? He must be indeed a clever villain to have so deceived you."

"Mr. Haddon has done enough," she answered proudly, "to justify my faith in him. And let me tell you, Captain Forbes, that I believe in his word so implicitly that I have given him my word that until midnight to-night I shall neither question his motives nor interfere with any action of his. Nor shall I permit another to act on my behalf."

Indignation and surprise fought for mastery, as Forbes answered with resolution:

"I shall refuse to obey you, Miss Brett. You forget that it is not your self who has been wronged so much as Sir Mortimer and myself. Now, sir, give me those papers that you took from the safe."

For the first time Madame de Varnier, shocked into rigid attention, spoke. Her surprise at the demand forced from her a contemptuous defense of myself.

"You are mad!" she cried involuntarily.

"You see, Miss Brett," exclaimed Forbes, with satisfaction, "his accomplice defends him."

"TO BE CONTINUED"

NOT THE TIME TO STOP.

Manager Saw the Possibilities in the Situation.

Jim Johnstone, the famous baseball umpire, said recently in New York that baseball crowds were far kinder to umpires than they used to be.

"This is true of theater crowds, too," said Mr. Johnstone. "Why, with provincial touring companies in the past, maltreatment was regularly expected. In fact, the companies profited by it in more ways than one."

"I know of a company that was playing 'The Broken Vow' in Palm Rock, a one night stand. The audience didn't like 'The Broken Vow,' and eggs, cabbages and potatoes rained upon the stage."

"Still the play went on. The hero raved through his endless speeches, dodging an onion or a baseball every other minute, and pretty soon from those missiles that he hadn't been able to dodge."

"But finally a gallery auditor in a paroxysm of rage and scorn hurled a heavy boot, and the actor, thoroughly alarmed, started to retreat."

"Keep on playing, you fool," hissed the manager from the wings, as he hooked in the boot with an umbrella. "Keep on till we get the other one."

PRESCRIPTIONS IN LATIN.

The Public Should Have Them Translated by the Druggists.

What virtue is there in the secrecy with which the doctor hedges about his profession?

"Professional etiquette" occupies a prominent place in the curriculum of every medical school, and when strictly analyzed "professional etiquette" seems to mean "doing what is best for the doctor, individually and collectively."

Among the things that "is best for the doctor" is the writing of his prescriptions in Latin, and thus keeping the public in ignorance not only of what it is taking for its ills, but forcing a call upon the doctor each time a prescription is needed.

In plain and unmistakable English the writing of prescriptions in Latin makes business for the doctors.

Let us say that you have the ague. You had it last year and the year before. Each time you have visited the doctor and he has prescribed for you—in Latin. You have never known what he has given you for the disease, and so each time you are forced to go to him again and give him an opportunity to repeat his prescription—in Latin, and his fee—in dollars.

If you ask the doctor why he uses Latin in writing his prescriptions, why he writes "agua" when he means water, he will give you a technical dissertation on the purity of the Latin language, and the fact that all words are derived from it, etc. It will be a dissertation that you may not be able to answer, but it will hardly convince you.

It would be a good thing for the public to devise a little code of ethics of its own; ethics that will be "a good thing for the public individually and collectively."

You call in the physician when you have the ague, the grippe, or any of the other ills to which human flesh is heir, and which you may have again some day. The doctor prescribes—in Latin, and you take this, to you, meaningless scribble to the druggist to have it compounded. Right here is where you come in, if you are wise. Say to the druggist that you want a translation of that prescription. It is your privilege to know what you are taking. While the doctor's code of ethics may not recognize this right it is yours just the same.

With the translated prescription in your possession you have two distinct advantages. You know what you are taking, and should you wish to call some other doctor at some time you will be able to tell him what drugs you have been putting into your system, and also if you should have the same disease again you can save yourself a visit to the doctor, and his fee, by taking this translated prescription to the druggist once more and having it refilled.

Jerome on Colored Evidence.

District Attorney Jerome, of New York, said one day of a piece of suspicious evidence:

"It is evidence that has been tampered with, colored. It is like the lady's report of her physician's prescription."

"A lady one day in July visited her physician. The man examined her and said:

"Madam, you are only a little run down. You need frequent baths and plenty of fresh air, and I advise you to dress in the coolest, most comfortable clothes—nothing stiff or formal."

"When she got home her husband asked her what the physician had said. The lady replied:

"He said I must go to the seashore, do plenty of automobileing, and get some new summer gowns."

Great Discovery Announced.

Sir William Crookes, as a result of his own researches and the experiments of Professors Krowalski and Moseicki, of Freiburg university, has discovered a process of extracting nitric acid from the atmosphere. The process is available for commercial, industrial and agricultural purposes, and is expected to revolutionize the nitrate industry and the world's food problem.

Where Russia is Behind.

England has 144 churches for every 100,000 people. In Russia there are only 55 churches for a similar number.

WEDDING GIFTS

The Happy Bride Takes an inventory

The bride had returned from her trip and was about to spend a long, happy morning looking over her wedding presents and finding out what she had really received. Before the great day she had been so excited and rushed that she had no time to examine her treasures closely, although she remembered, as in a dream, writing a large number of notes of acknowledgment. Then, too, 70 gifts had come after she had gone away.

The bride went into the room where the presents were arranged on all the tables the house afforded and two borrowed from neighbors, and separated the sheep from the lambs.

The first thing which caught her eye were a number of bunch glasses. She counted them and found there were 440 in all.

"They will be awfully nice when you give a ball," said her sister, who was accompanying her on this voyage of discovery.

The bride admitted that they would. "But you see, dear," she said thoughtfully, "our apartment has only five rooms and a bath, and the little library table is but 16 by 20 feet, so that it will probably be some years before I can invite 440 people to take dinner with me, or even give a 'small and early' dance to that number."

The sister giggled, and they inspected the coffee spoons, which came next on the table. There were 48 coffee spoons, and the bride sorted them into little groups and looked them over admiringly.

"I will use them by turns," she said. "This set first, then that, and so on."

"Why not have them exchanged for something else?" asked the sister.

"I don't think that would be nice," replied the bride, primly.

There were 17 cut-glass bonbon dishes and 29 bonbon spoons. There were 26 silver knives which the bride said were pie knives and her sister declared should be used either for ice cream or fish, or both, as occasion demanded.

There were 11 clocks.

"We can put two in each room," said the bride, "and I mustn't forget to go downtown this very afternoon and buy a dollar alarm clock to waken George in the morning."

"These are the puzzles," explained the sister, as the twain approached a table laden with silver implements. "Each member of the family has been given three guesses as to the identity of each but we haven't succeeded in making them all out yet."

The bride took up the implements one by one, knitted her brows and puzzled over them.

"This looks to me like something to eat asparagus with," she said, referring to a gnarled specimen.

"Oh! we've guessed that," replied the sister; "that is a combination cork-screw and bottle-opener and ice pick, and it is solid silver. It was easy, but just try your brains on this."

"This" resembled nothing so much as a dynamite bomb with a fussy top. It was evidently intended as a receptacle for some special thing, but what the bride could not make out in the least. There were all sorts and conditions of forks and pronged things which were not particularly ornamental and would only be useful if the owner knew to what to apply them.

"I should take them to a jeweler and have him explain their uses," said the sister.

"I will," acquiesced the bride. "Perhaps he will know, though I doubt it. Did I get any doilies or embroidered things for the table?"

"No, but you are the happy owner of 11 lamps."

"And there is both electric light and gas in the apartment. Still, when we build a summer home they will come in nicely. I hope we received some pictures."

"No, no pictures, but 14 trays of various sorts and conditions."

"Any furniture?"

"Certainly not; people don't give such things, but you received 11 pepper pots."

"We will certainly have a spicy life," sighed the bride. "I had hoped some one would send me a tea table."

"It seems to me you are awfully ungrateful," said the sister.

"I am not," contradicted the bride. "I love everything I have. They are all perfectly lovely, and I wouldn't part with one of them for the world. I am merely taking an inventory. Tell you what I will do. I will go right down town and find out what these things are intended for—and—"

"If you don't think it would be dreadful, I will take a basketful of duplicates along and exchange them for articles I did not get. You are sure you don't think it would be dreadful? But what will the givers say when they come to call and don't find their gifts? You honestly don't think it will matter? Well, then, come with me and we will exchange the lamps for tablecloths and some of those silver spoons for a bread tray, and seven pie knives for a carving set. I don't expect to have a great amount of pie—George doesn't like it."

India's Great Summer Resort.

The season for business and pleasure in Simla and the other summer resorts in the Himalayas is from the middle of April to the end of September. During that period the government is removed from Calcutta to Simla. During the hot months there are 4,000 white people in Simla; the rest of the year only 400.

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Positively cured by these Little Pills.

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SMALL PILL. SMALL DOSE. SMALL PRICE.

Genuine Must Bear Fac-Simile Signature

REFUSE SUBSTITUTES.

Sure to Have One.

Lincoln Steffens, in an address on municipal politics, said in Chicago of a certain city:

"That city is as notorious for its rottenness as the town of Potosi is notorious for another characteristic."

"Here is an incident that will give you an idea of the reputation of Potosi."

"On a train one day a man rushed into a car, held up his hand for attention, and shouted excitedly:

"Anybody here who belongs to Potosi?"

"Aye, I do," said a small, dry old fellow calmly.

"Then," said the other, "lend us yer corkscrew."

She Experimented.

A little girl of five was taken to church one Sunday, and listened with unexpected attention to the sermon, which graphically told the story of the stilling of the tempest on the Sea of Galilee, and how Christ walked on the waves. In the afternoon her mother missed her and began an anxious search of the house. As she neared the bathroom she heard sounds of splashing, and hurried to the door to behold a small, excited face peering over the rim of the big white tub, and to hear a small, excited voice exclaim: "Say, mamma, this walking on the water is quite a trick."

Time to Fly.

The trust magnate leaped up from the banquet table and made a dive for his 100-mile-an-hour automobile.

"Hold on!" cried the astonished toastmaster. "Won't you wait for us to serve the dessert?"

"No," replied the nervous magnate; "I just saw a suspicious face loom up at the window. The next thing served will be a